No. 61

The REDEMPTION of Marie Gordon

THE TRAGIC STORY OF WRONGED WOMANHOOD

Price 10¢

She did not struggle to free herself from the young man's embrace. It gave her a thrill such as she had never experienced before.

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AS ROY MARTIN listened to the confession of Mabel Dallas, his face was hard and terrible to behold as he drew back and pushed her rudely from him. So this is the girl that I had always loved, he thought within himself, and she has played false with me. A lump rose in his throat.

The cry that broke from his lips was like a sob.

"Then this is your confession that you have been trifling with me?" he cried vehemently. "You — you. God! I did not expect to hear this from your own lips!"

"Trifling?" she flushed. "No, a thousand times no. Think of me with whatever contempt you must, but spare me — at least, spare me that. I was honest with you always. You have had your chance and would not take it. You must admit that in all fairness to me.

"I met you alone time and time again. You never made serious love to me. Perhaps that was because you felt too sure of me. But you never put me to the test. If you lost me the fault is yours."

While she spoke Roy Martin kept his face averted. In spite of it all he was forced to admit that there was some truth in her words.

Yet, he could not reconcile himself to the fact that she had passed out of his reach.

He rose abruptly and began to pace restlessly up and down the narrow path. His boyish figure, tall and bent, made a mute appeal which touched the girl as no speech could have done.

"I am sorry, Roy," she kept on saying over and over again to herself. "I am very sorry."

Presently he turned and came to her side, looking down on her girlish beauty without saying a word.

All the bitterness had left his face, but his expression at last was that of utter hopelessness.

Mabel Dallas looked into his face, still very close

to hers.

It was with a keen pang of remorse and pity that she saw the face of her girlhood friend seamed with unspeakable agony. It came closer until it almost touched hers.

She drew back with a gasp.

"I—I beg your pardon," he faltered wearily.

His voice was cold and lifeless. It was difficult for her to believe that this was Roy Martin speaking to her.

"You did not deserve my rebuke," he continued. "After all there is really no one to blame but myself. I knew that it was folly for me to love you, and yet I could not help it.

"I could no more help loving you than the bee could stay away from the fragrant rose which coaxed it on with its sweet odor and nodding head.

"And you are right when you say I had my chance. I imagined that no other man in the world would dare to take you away from me. The very idea seemed absurd. But it happened and I am the most wretched man alive."

His voice, still lifeless and cold, had risen somewhat as he uttered the last words. That old note of pathos had crept into it.

Another long moment of painful silence ensued.

"I—I hope you will be very happy with that man," he faltered. "You deserve to be. There is nothing more to be said now but good-by."

Here he broke down completely and turned to hide his overwhelming emotion and real tears.

In an instant she was beside him. This ordeal had become unbearable.

"Please don't carry on like that, Roy," she almost sobbed. "I shall always remember you as the dearest, most loyal friend I ever had. I am afraid I shall never be completely happy," she added, laying her hand on his

shoulder. "I can not tell you why, but I have a premonition that there will be nothing but tears in store for me."

He looked at her curiously for a moment as if he was about to speak again, but his lips remained sealed.

"I am not only sorry for you, Roy," she spoke again in that same low, tremulous voice. "I am sorry for myself, and that is perhaps more than I ought to say to you."

With an impulsive motion she held out her hand to him.

If Mabel Dallas expected him to take her outstretched hand and utter the words she longed to hear in this crisis, she was disappointed.

Perhaps he could not see her white hand in the darkness, nor the pleading look in her eyes.

"Good-by, Mabel," he cried suddenly, then turned and ran.

"Roy—Roy!" she called after him, tears welling up in her eyes. "Oh, please don't leave me like that."

But he did not hear her. He disappeared like a black shadow.

The realization that this was to be the end between them filled her young heart with a feeling of mingled pain and relief.

She had told him that she was sorry, but that did not satisfy him.

And she had nothing else to give him since her solemn promise bound her to Lester Calvin, whose hypnotic glance and gentle, persuasive voice she could not resist.

The strain of the meeting was beginning to make itself felt.

Reaction set in and with a low sob she almost fell beck upon the seat, buried her hot face in her hand and

wept bitter tears.

Remorse insistently returned, for her mind had turned and wandered along the road of yesterday. She saw Roy Martin, a rosy cheeked boy, carrying her books home from school.

She saw him through her mind's eye how he defended her when a quarrel arose.

And there arose before her a vision—a pale face with a tiny stream of blood trickling down the cheeks. Her youthful cavalier was fighting for her against overwhelming odds.

Mabel recalled with a little shudder how he was battered down and how he had come up, smiling and fighting still.

And he had always in after years been her best friend. That friendship had ripened into love. And now she had lost him. She had sent him away after breaking his heart.

But the feeling of remorse was presently replaced by a sense of fear.

She had fallen desperately in love with a man of whom she knew nothing. Would he love her as tenderly and devotedly as she knew Roy would have done?

It was too late, however, to think about that now. She was madly in love with the man from New York. Nothing else mattered seriously.

He must be a perfect gentleman, otherwise he could not be the son of her mother's old friend. It was this thought that gave her a certain degree of comfort.

She made a determined effort to put Roy Martin out of her mind, and finally succeeded.

She had chosen her path. But where did it lead her? Where?

The foolish girl tried to get some satisfaction out of the knowledge that other young girls from her

country town had married men from New York and had gone with them.

But here Mabel made a mistake. The girls she recalled had gone to New York alright, but they were not married before they left.

And some of them had made precisely the same horrible error she was about to make now. Her fate was destined to be the same—and worse, much worse.

— 1928 —

Chapter 200

THE WRONG ROAD

MABEL DALLAS sat motionless, her eyes dimmed with tears. In the distance a big touring car was traveling along the road which led to New York. She could see the lights as they twinkled. They seemed to beckon to her. The night was wonderfully quiet. She could hear the tempestuous beating of her own heart. It almost frightened her.

Rising quickly, she started for home at a brisk pace. Before she had gone thirty yards the tall figure of a man loomed up before her. It was her lover, Lester Calvin.

"Ah, Mabel," he cried, evidently glad to see her. "Your mother and I were becoming worried about you. It is a beautiful night. I don't believe I ever saw anything like it in New York."

The young girl stopped short at the sound of his voice. Its mellow and coaxing tone was soothing to her shattered nerves.

His gentle caress soon dispelled the feeling of bitterness in her heart. The tonic she needed at this particular momnt was skillfully supplied by Calvin. He was a past master in the art of consoling unhappy women.

As soon as his compelling dark eyes looked into hers, she realized that her place was at his side, and that the greatest happiness of her young life was within his keeping.

When he drew her arm through his, she followed him willingly.

"Let us take a short stroll along the road," he

suggested.

She nodded her head in silence.

He made several other remarks and when she failed to make a reply he stopped short and gazed at her.

"What is the matter, Mabel?" he inquired apprehensively. "You don't seem to be yourself. Has anything happened to make you unhappy? If that is the case, please tell me."

"Nothing at all, dear," she replied slowly. "I am very happy, yes, very happy—now."

"But why do you add that 'now'?" Calvin queried, watching her closely. "Does that signify that your life has not always been a tranquil and happy one?"

"My life really did not count for much until I met you," she responded. "Of course, there were days when I imagined myself happy, but it was followed always by that feeling of incompleteness, of loneliness and desolation. But I am happy now."

She gazed up into his face, shyly, yet trustfully, then put her hands in those outstretched.

"Are you completely happy now, sweetheart?" Calvin whispered into her ears as he drew her to his bosom.

"I am very happy when I am with you, dearest," she murmured. "It is only when I think of you leaving us that my heart grows sad. This will be a dreary place without you."

A satisfied smile shot across the face of the intent listener.

He turned for a moment to conceal the lurking devil gleaming out of his eyes.

Then he threw away the half finished cigar and drew her to a seat.

"I am very sorry that I can not stay another week," he announced. "A matter of grave importance

requires my presence in New York at the earliest possible moment."

Mabel Dallas hid her face in her hands and began to sob quietly.

"Ah, I love you more than my life!" Calvin went on passionately. "I don't know what I shall do without you. God knows I will miss you terribly. I can hardly think of going away without you."

The young girl's sobs became more audible.

"God, girlie!" he cried, holding her very close to him. "I wish I could make you understand how dear you are to me!"

She nestled against his bosom. She was apparently content to lay there without making a reply to his words.

Finally he lifted her face and kissed her. She gave a shiver and sighed.

"Ah, if I could only take you with me," Calvin murmured. "What a wonderful trip we would have together. And how you would enjoy living in a big city like New York. You'd never want to go back to a small country town like this. I would try very hard to make you happy, dearie.

"We could be married immediately upon our arrival. This world would be a glorious place to live in with you as my wife——"

"But why couldn't we be married here before we leave?" the young girl asked timidly.

"There isn't time for that," he responded quickly. "I must be in New York in three days. I have already made arrangements."

"When do you expect to leave?" Mabel queried in that same timid voice.

"Tomorrow night. There is a train which leaves Gloversville at eleven."

Mabel was still undecided.

She disliked the idea of leaving without her mother's knowledge and she told him so.

"An elopement would be so romantic, sweetheart," Calvin said coaxingly. "Besides, you need not worry so far as your mother is concerned.

"I shall write to her the moment we are married and assume all the blame, for as my wife I shall have the right to answer for you. Will you come?"

There was a moment of painful silence.

"Will you come, Mabel?"

He was gazing into her eyes and his smile drew the answer from her.

"Yes," she said. "I'll go with you."

The hour was late when the two lovers walked arm in arm homeward. Mrs. Dallas had retired. This good old soul trusted the man fully.

She thoroughly believed him to be a man of honor.

When the following morning dawned, Calvin called bright and early. He acquainted Mrs. Dallas with the fact that he intended to leave in a few days.

He did not intimate that he and her daughter had agreed to elope that same night.

Of course, Mrs. Dallas prevailed upon him to stay at least another week, but he made it so emphatic that he had to be in New York within a week at least that she desisted.

Mabel took no part in the conversation.

Her mother thought it rather ungracious that her daughter did not assist her in persuading their guest to remain. With the excuse that she was not feeling well she went to her room where she spent most of the day.

During the afternoon Mrs. Dallas went to a distant village to call on an old friend who was ill. This

gave the couple ample opportunity to make the final preparations.

The evening meal proved to be rather cheerless. Mrs. Dallas, always in a good humor, chatted pleasantly with Calvin.

Mabel was silent and refused to eat.

"What is the matter, child?" the mother asked, alarmed.

"I am suffering with a headache," the young girl fibbed. "If you and Mr. Calvin will kindly excuse me, I'll go to my room."

No one offered any objections.

Mrs. Dallas entertained her guest that evening, but when the clock struck nine she retired. Calvin left at once for his hotel at Gloversville.

When he went to his room finally the hotel was dark and very quiet. His traveling bag was ready.

Like a shadow he glided along the corridor and down the stairs. The soft lawn deadened his footsteps as he drove swiftly to the spot he and Mabel had selected as a place to meet.

A few minutes later another shadowy figure left the house. It was the girl.

She stopped a short distance from the house and looked back. She was weeping quietly to herself.

Once or twice she seemed about to retrace her steps and go back, but each time something within her urged her to pursue the chosen path.

Mabel was not aware that the tall figure of a man had suddenly darted from behind some shrubbery and that he was following her at a safe distance.

Her heart was thumping so heavily that she would not have heard his footsteps even if he had been walking directly behind her.

She hurried on swiftly until she came to a short

turn in the road. Mabel was no coward, but she began to tremble with fear as she found herself alone in the darkness.

As she stood there, staring wildly in every direction, she heard someone call her name softly.

She recognized the voice instantly. It was that of Calvin.

The young girl ran forward eagerly and the next moment she was in his waiting arms. He crushed her to him and covered her hot face with kisses.

"I am so frightened," she whispered. "I imagined someone was following me."

Then suddenly she began to sob frantically.

"You must not give way like that, sweetheart," he said soothingly. "You don't regret you came, do you?"

She did not answer.

"Are you sorry you came, Mabel?"

Still sobbing, she shook her head.

"Think of all the glorious happiness in store for us," he went on gently. "You shall have everything your heart desires. I'll buy you the stars from heaven if you want them.

"Come now, dry your tears. As soon as we arrive in New York I will write to your mother and I know she will forgive us for having eloped."

Mabel Dallas disengaged herself from his embrace and dried her tears.

"And you will make good your promise and marry me as soon as we reach New York?" she asked, looking up at him pleadingly.

"Why, to be sure," Calvin responded in a slightly raised voice. "I hope you do not doubt my word."

"No, I do not doubt you, my lover," the girl answered slowly, as if she was weighing every word. "But you know, this all came so sudden and it means so much

to me. I can't realize that it is true. I never expected to be married at eighteen."

Calvin was about to make another reply, but he closed his lips quickly.

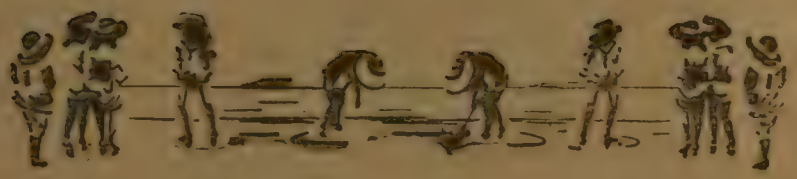
His keen eyes had preceived the figure of a man standing in the darkness not more than ten feet away. He looked like an ominous specter and Calvin gave an involuntary shudder.

How long this man had been standing there he did not know, but the longer he looked the plainer he could see the outlines of his tall figure.

Calvin was about to speak when the man began to move and came closer in a few rapid strides.

Mabel was staring with wildly dilating eyes. She had recognized him at the first glance.

It was Roy Martin.



Chapter 201

THE RIVALS

MABEL'S heart almost stopped beating when she saw Roy Martin walk directly in front of Calvin and assume a threatening attitude. Her womans intuition told her that some sort of a catastrophe was about to take place. For a short space of time her limbs were paralyzed and she was utterly unable to utter a sound.

Calvin's anger had risen quickly.

The conduct of the intruder seemed impudent in the extreme. He resented it and waited calmly until he stood almost shoulder to shoulder with him.

"What is the meaning of this, Mr. Calvin?" young Martin asked in a voice that was like the sharp crack of a gun.

Mabel uttered a little scream. Then a few moments of tense silence ensued.

Calvin was apparently at a loss what to answer. It seemed that the unexpected interference of Roy Martin had robbed him of his power of speech.

"I am waiting for an explanation from you, sir," the young man spoke again. "Will you oblige me?"

"May I ask what you want to know, Mr. Martin?" the other countered. "Your manner is insolent. Since when do I owe you an explanation for anything I may do or say?"

The young man stood up very straight.

"You may do anything you like so long as it does not affect Miss Dallas," he said in a ringing tone. "But when her good name and honor are threatened, I propose

to interfere. Only a coward and a cur would stoop to what you are doing now."

Calvin winced at the epithets applied to him. His face had gone dangerously white.

"Have a care, my young fellow!" he snarled. "I would advise you to modify your language!"

"I don't want to mince words with a man of your vile character!" Martin shot back. "No man with honorable intentions would steal a young girl away from her mother in such a manner. And I want to know where you are taking her."

"That does not concern you in the least, sir!" Calvin returned harshly. "Miss Dallas and I are not responsible to you for our conduct."

"But it does concern me, Mr. Calvin!" came back swiftly. "It is the duty of any man of honor and decency to raise his voice and hand in protest when he sees an innocent young girl taken advantage of in so cowardly a manner.

"I happened to overhear every word of your conversation. You can not deny the dishonorable fact that you are taking her away from her home by stealth.

"Your method of procedure has given me just cause for distrust. If you are not the man I think you are and always believed you to be, you will allow Miss Dallas to return home at once."

"Allow me to inform you, Mr. Martin, that your interference is not at all desired!" Calvin glowered. "Miss Dallas goes with me of her own free will. I may inform you that she is to become my wife. Perhaps you object to that.

"However, I deny you the right to follow us like a common sneak and intrude upon us in this unwarranted fashion. The best thing you can do is to go about your business. I hope I have made myself sufficiently

plain."

Roy Martin came a little closer. His hands were clenched.

"I would not object to Miss Dallas becoming any honest man's wife," he said. "Please understand that. Your conduct stamps you as a scoundrel absolutely devoid of honor. You say you intend to marry her. Well, I don't believe it, and I insist that she be allowed to return to her home with me."

"And suppose I refuse to accede to your demand, Mr. Martin?" Calvin hissed, his eyes flashing fire. "Miss Dallas is my promised wife. She is of age and I have a perfect right to take her anywhere I chose so long as she is willing."

The situation was becoming more tense every moment. Serious trouble was brewing.

Roy Martin, impetuous and hot-blooded, and spurred on by the knowledge of right and honor, was determined not to allow his boyhood sweetheart to remain in the clutches of this man.

Calvin was equally determined not to relinquish the beautiful young girl at this stage of the game.

As for Mabel, she had taken a position back of her lover because she was afraid of Roy. Her mind had undergone no change during the heated exchange of words.

She loved Calvin all the more as he stood ready to fight for her.

What she feared came the next instant.

Martin's demand, repeated, was refused. His last vestige of self-control was swept away. He struck blindly at the man whom he hated with all his soul.

The blow fell short. Calvin, having stepped in close, shot a terrific uppercut to the point of the younger man's jaw.

For a few seconds the latter staggered, his hands

dangling loose at his side. Then he fell face forward on the ground. He made a feeble effort to regain his feet, but his head was swimming. He fell again and lay still.

Without pausing to investigate how badly young Martin was injured, Calvin seized the girl by the arm and ran towards the waiting automobile with her.

It was the work of a few seconds to assist her into the front seat. The next instant he stepped on the gas and the high-powered car dashed away at a dizzy rate of speed.

It was only natural that a traveling man like Lester Calvin should be familiar with the roads.

Never once did he look at the signs at cross-roads. The machine roared through villages and small towns. New York must be reached before morning.

Mabel Dallas occasionally clung to the driver's arm when the car suddenly swerved around a corner. She admired his daring and self-assurance.

There was not much chance for conversation, and the young girl was not sorry. The constant choking in her throat made speech impossible.

"If you get sleepy, sweetheart," Calvin told her very gently. "You can curl up on the back seat and have a nice nap before we get to New York."

The girl shook her head.

"No, I am not a bit sleepy," she answered. "I would rather sit up here with you."

Those were the only words exchanged until they reached the road which ran along the bank of the Hudson River.

Another two hours' drive now, and they would be in New York.

"When we get to the big town," Calvin said, slowing up and placing an arm about the girl's shoulder, "I'll take you to a first class hotel where you can sleep as long

as you want to. In the meantime I'll be getting the marriage license and make the necessary preparations for the wedding."

Mabel smiled happily. Once more she was convinced that her lover was indeed a man of honor.

"There is a cozy flat furnished on Forty-second Street," he went on. "It is not far from a beautiful park. I think you will like it there."

"Oh, I know I will," cried Mabel rapturously. "I will be satisfied and happy wherever you take me."

Calvin averted his face to hide the cynical smile.

"One of my close personal friends own a classy restaurant on lower Broadway," Calvin spoke again. "I wrote to him, and he is reserving a private room for us. The marriage ceremony will be performed there, and we can enjoy a good wedding dinner without going anywhere else."

The young girl made no objections. She trusted her companion implicitly. Ah, how happy she would be when once his wife.

As day began to dawn, and the sun finally flooded the surrounding country with brilliant light, Mabel Dallas opened her eyes in wonder.

They were racing past magnificent residences and beautiful grounds. Occasionally she caught a glimpse of the river.

Yes, this was New York. Thousands and thousand of people swarmed on the broad sidewalks.

Motor vehicles of every description and make filled the streets. The gong of the streetcars clanged and the elevated rushed past them overhead.

Gigantic buildings reached up almost to the heavens. Everywhere there was life and color.

As the car stopped at the curb in front of a hotel, Mabel allowed her lover to lift her to the ground.

A uniformed individual with an ugly leer on his face, took her suitcase and followed into the lobby.

Calvin stepped over to the desk and wrote a name into the register. Then he spoke to the clerk for a few moments in a low voice, making a surreptitious motion toward the waiting girl.

"See that she has everything she wants," he ended. "I'll call for her to-night at eight."

"Alright, Lester," the clerk replied with a smirk.

Before Mabel was assigned to a room, she received some instructions from the man she hoped to marry that same day.

With childish trustfulness she raised her lovely face and offered him her lips in a good-by kiss.

"I hope you'll sleep well, dear," were his parting words. "Now don't worry about a thing. I'll write to your mother at once."

Mabel received another thrill when she was taken up to the seventh floor on the elevator.

She stood stock still and gasped for breath as the cab shot up with tremendous speed.

The room chosen for her was a dream of perfection. It had been provided with all those little things so dear to a woman's heart. But she was too tired to enjoy all that her eyes beheld.

A soft bed welcomed her, and in a few minutes she fell into the drugged sleep of utter exhaustion.

Chapter 202

SOLD BODY AND SOUL

PERHAPS you, dear reader, have a young daughter or a sister budding into womanhood. And if so, for God's sake, don't let false pride keep you from giving her the information she ought to have so that she may be able to guard herself against the evil that may steal upon her like a thief in the night—a devouring wolf in sheep's clothing.

The time has come when we must acknowledge that morality is paying a terrible price to puritanism. Prudery is the mother of vice, not of virtue.

Ignorance is man and woman's greatest enemy, and in ignorance of sex responsibility is the most brutalizing and terrible form of ignorance with which we are called upon to deal.

How much better is it to teach a decent and uplifting phase of sex relation than submit our girls to inevitable demoralization.

Suddenly as the awakening of the orchards in the soft, sweet rains of an April night, so love blossoms in every young girl's heart. But to you, who may have been her father or mother, the miracle was hidden.

The transition from childhood to womanhood was swift, subtle, even unconscious, and the girl herself did not realize the change.

You still saw the child of a few months or weeks ago. Your vision, dulled by the hard, drab years of wage-chasing life, was not quick enough to sense the transfiguration.

And so when the girl's first sweetheart called, you

were perhaps annoyed. And you made up your mind to stop such nonsense at once.

But there was really nothing wrong. The girl and her sweetheart were playing the oldest game of make-belief under the stars. Your frowns, side remarks, and general hostility humiliated the young lad and withered your girl with shame.

And then what happened?

Your daughter's first lover failed to come again. They met clandestinely.

The girl began to spend evenings "studying with her school friends", and what began as a harmless, little cub courtship, became warped and your girl with it.

She turned toward the wrong path by inventing fibs to keep you from learning the truth.

Successful in eluding detection, she slowly grew bolder. Her tongue quickly became glib with protecting lies. Within a month all her fear of you and your authority disappeared, and contempt for your perception and credulity succeeded love and reverence.

Before long she had graduated into the love school of the street corner, adept in all the dangerous, reckless arts of the prowling flirt, intimate of the poolroom loafers, and the final disgrace you bewailed when it was too late.

How often are young girls allowed to follow their own inclinations in matters that should be under the strict and wary supervision of their parents?

How often are young girls sent to the cities by themselves, ignorant of the many pitfalls that have been prepared for them?

It was dusk in New York, the hour when the streets are full of men and women hurrying from their various places of employment. The crowds streamed across Times Square toward the subway in a great

human flood.

Suddenly around the corner whirled a heavy express truck.

The driver blew his horn shrilly, and the crowd, made wary by long experience, scattered in all directions. All but one girl.

A single moment she hesitated, glanced both ways, dropped back a step, and then, changing her mind, dashed forward in an attempt to reach the other side of the street in safety.

But the moment's hesitation was fatal!

The truck struck her and hurled her senseless form ten feet. A few minutes later her lifeless form was born away in an ambulance to the city morgue.

There were no marks of identification on the unfortunate girl's person. The police were reduced to the necessity of publishing a description of her in all the New York papers, hoping that some relative would come to claim the body.

And in answer to that description, which was made as detailed and accurate as possible, nearly four hundred mothers and sisters wrote to, or appeared in person at the morgue.

That means that nearly four hundred women within reach of New York city confessed that girls whom they loved, corresponding to the description of this unfortunate girl, had disappeared.

But not one of those women who called were able to identify the latest victim, and she was buried at the city's expense.

What is true of New York, is also true of other large cities in this great country of ours.

All too frequently young girls are permitted to go to these cities alone. Some of them disappear and are never heard from again.

In spite of the fact that vice districts have been abolished, the horrible thing called "White Slavery", still exists and flourishes.

Various methods are employed in luring young girls to sure moral destruction.

As in the case of Mabel Dallas, some handsome chap with a nice persuasive voice and manners, is selected for the task. He is well paid for loafing about small country towns.

Some girl with more beauty than knowledge is sure to fall for him. A few weeks of ardent love-making, and the prospective victim is ready to be shipped to her doom.

Mabel Dallas, when she awoke in that hotel room, sat up and rubbed her eyes. This was to be her wedding day, and she was very happy. As per agreement, her lover called.

"Everything is ready, sweetheart," he told her. "I have a taxi waiting at the door. Come."

After a bountiful breakfast they drove through the various parks and over the boulevard that followed the Hudson river.

From time to time, as conversation lagged, Lester Calvin studied the lovely young girl through the corners of his eyes.

"I have arranged for our wedding dinner at the restaurant of a friend of mine," he said. "The preacher will arrive at noon with the license."

Mabel made no reply, for a sudden tightening sensation about her heart had robbed her of the power of speech.

She looked at her lover, who was smiling pleasantly. She shrank away from him as he attempted to take her in his arms.

"You—you mustn't, dear," she objected. "Don't

forget that this is broad daylight. Someone will see us."

In the meantime the taxi glided through the streets. The driver apparently knew where to stop. It was in the heart of New York's Chinatown.

The restaurant they entered was owned by Mung How, the richest Oriental in the city.

With a firm grip on the girl's arm, Calvin guided her up a narrow, dark stairs until on the top floor they came to a beautiful banquet hall, decorated with enormous gilt dragons and other carved figures.

Even the chairs and tables were carved as if they were made for a palace.

Mabel Dallas experienced a sudden feeling of fear, and clung to her lover.

She did not see any white people in the place; only Chinamen in long silk robes and pretty little Chinese girls in bright-colored tunics with gold ornaments in their black hair.

Calvin called a cat-like waiter and whispered something to him. The couple was immediately led through a corridor from the banquet hall to a small private room, even more gorgeous.

Mabel saw a profusion of silk cushion and fantastic furniture. She became conscious of a strange, heavy odor that was not very pleasant.

In one corner of the room was a tiny shrine with a bronze idol about a foot high and some incense smoldering before it. The girl stood looking at it as if in a trance.

Then, as she turned to say something to Calvin, she almost screamed in terror. Her lover was gone, and she was alone! Almost overcome with a feeling of impending disaster, she sank into a chair. Her hands clasped desperately.

Suddenly she rose and sprang to the heavy carved

door and shook the knob, but it did not budge.

The door was locked and she was a prisoner. Desperate, she ran to another door on the other side of the room. This was also locked.

Mabel beat upon it with both of her hands, afraid to cry out. In despair, she finally sank down upon a heap of cushions and buried her face in her hands.

A slight noise made her look up quickly. The young girl was no longer alone.

A door had opened and closed and inside stood a magnificently robed Chinaman, his old and yellow face a mass of wrinkles, twisted into a grin. He looked at the girl through slits of eyes in bold admiration.

"Who—who are you?" Mabel gasped, springing to her feet. "What do you want? Where is Mr. Calvin?"

The three questions were asked in constantly growing terror, for there was something fearfully menacing in the silent old Chinaman's covetous glance. At last he said in a purring tone:

"Mr. Calvin, him go home. You very pletty girl. You my girl now."

"What do you mean?" Mabel cried, drawing back.

"You belong to me," came back in the same purring tone. "I pay Mr. Calvin five thousand dollars to bring you here."

The young girl almost fainted as the horrible truth rushed into her mind. This man, who professed to love her, had deliberately sold her to this fiendish old Chinaman like a slave.

With a desperate effort she drew herself up and faced him.

"You let me out or I'll scream at the top of my voice," she told him.

His grin, so filled with confidence and evil, sickened her.

"You no scream. It will not help, for no one can hear," he said. "What's the matter, anyhow? Don't you like me? I am Mung How. I am velly rich man and I'll buy you anything you want. You stay. No?"

Mabel Dallas shrank back from the man's leering yellow face.

"Oh, please, let me go," she begged. "I wouldn't stay here for anything. I'll pay you back every dollar. I'll work my fingers off to earn that five thousand dollars. Please let me go."

The old Chinaman uttered a triumphant laugh.

With a quick motion he reached into his pocket and drew forth a string of beautiful pearls. Once more his fingers reached and came forth with a mean-looking dagger.

"You velly pletty girl," he murmured. "You love Mung How, and you get this." He held up the pearls. "You no love him, you get this." He flourished the dagger menacingly before her eyes. "Now you take what you like."

The old Chinaman was advancing upon the girl with slow, cat-like treads as she retreated.

She was almost hypnotized by his narrow, black eyes, shining with a devilish light. She felt like a bird in a cage with the cat crawling through the wires.

She stared wildly about for an avenue of escape, and then she screamed. The nex instant she fell fainting in his arms.

Three months had pased since Mabel Dallas' disappearance. In the meantime her mother had died of a

broken heart. All efforts to locate her only child had been in vain.

Nor was the traveling man who called himself Lester Calvin, ever heard from again.

Then one day the New York newspapers startled their readers with the announcement that Mung How, the richest Chinaman in the city had been murdered by his white mistress.

Details of the crime were lacking. Mung How had been found with a dagger buried in his heart.

Not much of a search was made for the woman suspected of the crime. The police knew something about the old Chinaman's predilection for pretty white girls.

A quiet investigation was started which resulted in the discovery of systematic white slavery.

If one of those yellow skinned Orientals wanted a white girl, a few thousand dollars brought her to him.

Just about the time the investigation closed, a young woman with an old face got off the train at the Twelfth Street station in Chicago.

She beckoned to a taxi driver, who, after receiving his instructions, drove to a certain address on the Northside.

It was here that Mabel Dallas fought to regain what she had lost in the care of a devoted aunt. But there are some things a fallen woman can never recover.

No power on earth could restore to her the priceless gift — her innocence. For three long months she had been the mistress of a Chinaman. Against her will, of course, but nevertheless his mistress.

He had been kind to her after a fashion. Handsome gowns and jewels were hers without asking. It was only when she begged to leave her prison that he demurred.

The frightful experience had undermined the poor

girl's health. And to regain that, and escape possible notoriety by being arrested, she remained in hiding for several months.

The physician who repeatedly examined Mabel told her in all frankness that she must live out in the open if she wanted to escape death. Dread tuberculosis already had fastened its claws in her vitals.

And so Mabel began watching the newspapers. But the want advertisements offered nothing which suited her case.

Discouraged, she visited the various employment offices in the city. In one of them she was told that a maid was wanted at Oak Manor, the home of the Gordons.

— 1950 —

Chapter 203

THE NEW TUTOR

MABEL DALLAS was one of the many girls whom circumstances had forced into a life of shame. She had been tricked to leave home by a man who played upon her vanity. Once the winner of a beauty prize, she was a mere shell of her former self.

There were lines about her mouth nothing could erase. Her young soul was scarred and her mind was constantly tortured with the fact that some day she must give an accounting.

The pity of it all is that the man who was responsible for all her misery, and perhaps that of many other young girls, escaped without being punished. It is one of the most horrible phases of modern civilization.

As the days passed in her position as Alice Gordon's maid, Mabel's health improved steadily.

The conditions she worked under were ideal, almost. For one thing her mistress was not exacting, and the other servants in the house treated her kindly.

To a casual observer it became apparent at once that Alice Gordon desired to win the confidence of her new maid. She needed someone she could trust implicity.

Nora Evans had formerly been her paid spy in the house, and now Mabel was to assume the same role.

The breach between the Gordons had widened until it became a gap that could not be filled.

Again Phil ignored his wife and went about his business, social and otherwise, without consulting her.

Alice resented this bitterly. She almost had a fit when she found out through the servants that a new tutor was about to be engaged for the children.

She was so worked up about it that she confronted her husband the very next morning at the breakfast table.

And she approached the subject in her characteristic, brusque manner.

"Yes, it is true," Phil admitted. "I am planning to engage a competent instructor for the children."

"Don't you think I might have been consulted in the matter?" she demanded hotly.

"Why?" he inquired coolly, his eyes meeting hers without anger.

"Because it is humiliating to be ignored day after day," Alice complained. "Even the servants notice it. How much longer must I stand for that sort of thing?" She paused, and when he made no answer, she added, her voice shrill with anger: "You treat me worse than a servant. You are at least kind when you speak to them. They know more about what is going on in this house than I do."

Gordon shook his head and forced a smile.

"So far as my children are concerned, I am using my own judgement," he declared, unruffled. "Had you showed the least affection for them in the days gone by, I——"

"I wanted to love them and they wouldn't let me!" Alice broke in, tears of wrath in her eyes.

"Yes, you did." His short laugh was utterly devoid of merriment. "You can't tell me that, Alice. You began to hate my children shortly after we were married. What you did to little Harry, I shall never forget nor forgive. No, never!"

"That boy would be in his grave now if you had

been allowed to proceed with your cruel methods. It was Miss Desmond who saved his life. You know that as well as I do, but you are not honest enough to admit the truth."

"Miss Desmond!" Alice snorted. "Always Miss Desmond. Why did you ever let her go? Why didn't you keep her?"

"And you know that as well as I do," responded Phil with pain in his voice. "I fell for some more of your damned trickery. You made that one of the conditions to your father for bringing Betty back to him. I never saw a man so wrought up.

"I did not want to be responsible for his death, and so I consented to Miss Desmond being discharged. That was probably one of the worst mistakes I made. The children need her. Oh, how I wish I had never allowed her to get away."

His wife gave him a venomous glance.

"Why don't you get her back!" she cried. "Oh, I know that you have been moving heaven and earth in order to find her."

"So I have," came back with quiet determination. "And you may rest assured that Miss Desmond will come back as soon as I succeed in locating her. This time she'll come to stay. Remember that."

Alice did not like the look in her husband's eyes as he uttered the last words. They contained more than a threat.

After he had left for his office she sat for almost an hour brooding.

There was trouble brewing. She could feel it. Had Phil received some additional information that this former governess was Marie, his first wife? If not, why did he make it so plain that she would come to stay?

Continued in next number

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